

Lincoln's Education - Commentaries

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Abraham Lincoln and Education

Lincoln's Education— Commentaries

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

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EDUCATION AND CRIME.

The times are rapidly demonstrating the fact that intellectual development alone is not a preventive of crime. The statistics of the country show that crime has increased during the last quarter of a century more rapidly than the population. They also show that native-born criminals are increasing faster in proportion than the foreign-born criminals. All this, too, in the face of the fact that during the last twenty-five years schools, seminaries, and colleges have multiplied and their equipment and efficiency for intellectual culture greatly increased. These facts prove beyond a peradventure the truth of the proposition contained in the sentence with which this article begins.

There are influences at work in society, especially in our cities and towns, which tend to induce in the direction of crime against which intellectual development alone is not an effective barrier. The beauties of a strictly moral life may be referred to by the teachers in the public schools, and the consequences of idleness, drunkenness, theft, and licentiousness may be frequently and eloquently portrayed; but the open saloon, the coarse song, the profane drivel that greets the eyes and falls upon the ears of the children as they tread the streets to and from the schools far more than overbalances the moral impressions made by the tame ethical instruction imparted with the regular lesson routine of the public schoolroom.

Then, too, the theater, the dime novel, the progressive euchre game, and the select dance are so many educational forces which pull downward, instead of upward, in the scale of morals. All these taken together account for the alarming fact that, despite our splendid public-school system, our select schools, our colleges, and our grand universities, crime is rapidly on the increase, even among our native-born Americans.

What, then, is to be done? There must be a fundamental change made at the very basis of our educational system. Hitherto the chief, the sole aim in educating our youth, has been to develop intellect. The chief thing sought has been brain power, and the moral nature and the tender conscience have been treated either as things of little or no importance, or as things that would take care of themselves.

That this theory of education is wrong is as certain as it is that the moral nature and the immortal soul are of infinitely greater value than are the physical and intellectual natures. When a man is correctly developed morally, so developed that he recognizes moral obligation, the laws of right and wrong, and is true to all these convictions and obligations, then, and then only, is his existence a blessing to humanity and the world, and his life worth living. This truth must be recognized and form the basis of our educational work if it is to be a blessing to the race. Without this men may be intellectual

giants, as were Bolingbroke, Voltaire, Thomas Paine, and Aaron Burr, and their lives be only brilliant failures as were theirs. And until there is this fundamental change in our educational system, until our schools are so manned and so managed that they will develop conscience as well as intellect, crime must continue to increase more rapidly than our population, and the stability of our free institutions grow less and less secure, until the republic finally repeats the history of the republics of Greece and Rome.

A little reflection will enable any thoughtful man to see that the great need of the country to-day is a general diffusion of conscience—the quickening into life throughout the masses, and especially among the officers of the law, of the moral sense of duty and obligation. For want of this, men steal, cheat, embezzle, murder, and the judges of courts, governors of States, and members of Congress are believed by many to pay little or no regard to the obligations of their oath of office. For want of this regard the sugar trust is able to buy votes in the United States Senate, courts fail to convict criminals—whose guilt is self-evident, and officers, at the beck of the rum ring's dictation, refuse to enforce the law.

All this is noticed by the masses, and stimulates in them a disregard for law and a mania for committing crime. They see that criminals who have money or friends who have money can be cleared in the courts on the merest technicality.

But what a revolution in regard to all these matters would be speedily effected if all offices could be filled by men who, like Theodore Roosevelt, of New York, have a tender conscience as to the sacred obligations of an oath of office—who would, like him, faithfully execute the laws without fear or favor!

The historian tells us that the evening before Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated, in 1861, he was waited upon by a delegation of New York merchants who were greatly concerned lest there should be war. Their spokesman was William E. Dodge, afterward one of the most patriotic supporters of Mr. Lincoln in all his war measures. Mr. Lincoln received the delegation very cordially and chatted with them quite freely until Mr. Dodge, in presenting the purpose for which they had called, said with great earnestness, "Mr. President, let it be distinctly understood that there must be no war; war would destroy our commerce and ruin our city."

With that Mr. Lincoln's countenance at once became very grave, and after hesitating a moment, speaking in slow, measured, and emphatic tones, he said: "Gentlemen, no one could deprecate war more than I do; but in a few hours more, if I live, I shall take a solemn oath to defend the Constitution of the United States and enforce the laws of the land, and so help me God, I shall be true to that oath." Here was a deep, solemn sense of the obligations of an oath, and that conviction in that one great, grand man saved the life of this great nation.

The greatest need of the world to-day is the inauguration and the earnest application of a system of education that will develop in the rising generation this high, instinctive, unfaltering sense of moral obligation. Intellectual culture alone will never do it. On this point a writer in the Phrenological Journal well says:

The verdict of all experience, like the conclusions of philosophy, is that man is a complex being: he is not all intellect, and mental discipline is not all he requires to develop a noble manhood. His moral nature is higher than the intellectual, and training that reaches only the mind and neglects the heart must produce moral monsters—in short, criminals. Mental education is only complete when it instructs and develops the whole man. Mr. Lecky, in his "History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne," says: "It is one of the plainest of facts that neither the individuals nor the ages that have been most distinguished for intellectual achievements have been most distinguished for moral excellence, and that a high intellectual and material civilization has often coexisted with much depravity."

Dayton Ohio Release Institute.
9-18-1885

Lincolns Learning

By R. R. CAMDEN



LOWELL says of Lincoln that "one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face." A careful writer does not pay compliments merely for the sake of paying them, and this tribute should be weighed by those who study Lincoln's intellectual characteristics.

We grow up in the belief that an intellectual man must read a great deal, and most of those to whom we turn for guidance are qualified to find their bearings in libraries. A graduate of a good law school, an honor man at a university, an officer fit to hold a chair at West Point or Annapolis, a professor in a scientific institution, has read many a volume, and has had his reading sifted by his examiners. Every year brings its mention of someone who has translated from the classics into his own tongue, or rendered a masterpiece of his own tongue into a foreign one. If the poorest boy in an alley can resist the sports of his neighbors the public library opens to him. He may dream of a scholarship, a cadetship, a place in the civil service—in any event he feels that of the reading as well as the making of books there is no end. Such concerns as Bohn's library in England and Reclam's in Germany, print the noblest books of all the ages in so cheap a form that it is less costly to stock a bookcase than to indulge in any other form of amusement.

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Between us and the Greeks of old there lies a gulf. A thoughtful Athenian might be fond of reading—Demosthenes was—but he might not be. There were Greeks who conversed admirably and who could not read. If they needed a reference from a historian or a poet they called on a learned slave to look up the passage. There were Greeks to whom manuscripts were of secondary importance, yet who rejoiced in the noble tragedies of their country, who laughed at the comedies, who wept at oratorical pathos, who delighted in the arguments for aristocratic or democratic rule. Information and culture might be had, not without effort, but without poring over scrolls. We can hardly be in the presence of a statesman, a jurist, a critic or a divine of the first rank without thinking, "How much he has read." The Greek turned from one whom he admired and thought, "What eloquence this man must have heard, and in what conversation he must have played his part."

For three quarters of the centuries of the Christian era there were many strong intellects of the Greek type rather than the modern product of the school room or public library. Wonderful stories are told of lecturers in the medieval colleges, of the talk of old hermits who had thought on life for forty years, of pilgrims who could make the Holy Land a reality to every hearer, of monks who had borrowed wisdom from Arab sages. Thinking and conversation did much for students who saw few books for the excellent reason that there were not many to see.

In the Virginia of George Washington's youth and even of his prime there were men who could not read and write, but who were land owners and who could find a day of

leisure for mental enjoyment as well as for a hunting party. These men would ride twenty miles to court if a famous lawyer was to be heard, they could talk of a speech or a sermon they had heard twenty years before—they had what we may call the Greek intellect rather than that formed by books. Shakespeare owed far less to reading than to mingling with all sorts and conditions of men. Defoe was a man to whom the printed page meant less than the world around him. John Bunyan and Robert Burns might be said to have Greek minds.

Abraham Lincoln was born within the decade following the death of George Washington. He went to school for less than a year, and this period was subject to interruptions. But the power of oratory was as great in the Kentucky of his childhood and along the great river he knew as it was in the palmy days of Athens. There were men who had heard Daniel Boone tell how Indians' eloquence had roused in wild tribes a madness for the war paths or brought the fiercest braves to own that the hatchet must be buried. On the flatboats and in the frontier taverns were hunters and peddlers who did not in three months see a newspaper, yet grew intent if any one could tell them how Luther Martin had pleaded Burr's case and how the call for war in 1812 had sounded in Congress. In those enthusiastic days men were as proud of their candidate's eloquence as they were of the speed of their favorite horse or the muscle of their beloved pugilist.

Henry Clay was the leader of the Western Whigs. Clay almost by instinct learned all that was most effective in the court room, he mastered the arts of the stump, he absorbed what he needed for the floor of Congress and for the admiring galleries.

These varied gifts so impressed his contemporaries and such magnetism yet quivers on his name that his knowledge of history and law were often grossly exaggerated. He charmed men, he could say whatever he wished to say, he could evoke laughter or tears, but little had he read compared to Caleb Cushing, Thomas H. Benton or John Quincy Adams. In Clay's youth the hills of Virginia had echoed the enchanting words of one who could certainly not be classed among those learned in the law, yet who knew how to speak to men—the undying Patrick Henry.

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Lincoln felt the charm of Clay. At times he grieved over his meagre schooling and his few early glances at knowledge's ample page. Yet we may ask if a decade in the Harvard library could have done as much for him as the campaign in which he overcame the mighty circuit rider, Peter Cartwright. In what course of reading could he have learned what he learned when Douglas out-talked him, when, mortified and half-despairing, he begged of the Whig committee another chance, and this time won the honors? In Lincoln's foot races and wrestling matches there is a reminder of the Olympic game. The swing of his axe is like the prowess of a Homeric warrior. In that ever ready story and that marvelous fertility of illustration there sounded a backwoods echo of Athens in her prime. Lowell is right: "One of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face."

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The Inheritance of Abraham Lincoln



IF NECESSITY we all know whether we have or have not inherited money, land or securities, but there are intellectual legacies in which nearly every one in civilized countries has a share. Take a man with the four rules of arithmetic in his head, with a serviceable knowledge of fractions and decimals, with a slight acquaintance with algebra,—he is the heir of

J WRIGHT

were the heirs of the Greeks, who were the heirs of the Egyptians. It is possible to forget this or even to go through life without thinking of it, but once placed before the mind it cannot be denied. The Greek constitutions, the Roman laws, the dramas that ante-dated Shakespeare by many a century; all these are part of the heritage of civilization. First the printing press, then the cheap press, and later the public libraries brought the inheritance into clearer view.

For a thousand years at least all the educated men of Europe knew Latin, and many of them knew it better than their mother tongue. Bacon wrote in Latin to be remembered, so he thought, after the English tongue had passed away. Milton wrote powerful Latin prose, and Johnson was effective in Latin verse. Long after the Reformation international correspondence was carried on in Latin. At the end of the eighteenth century there were colleges that would have frowned on lectures not in Latin. To this day there are English schools in which boys learn Greek from grammars written in Latin. Nearly all the great writers of the Old World have had Latin training, and most of them had some familiarity with Greek.

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However, let us confine ourselves to the writers of English, and we can produce two masters of style who on a hasty survey might be called destitute of classical training. It is easy to name them—John Bunyan and Abraham Lincoln—were they or were they not partakers of the great classic inheritance? They may have thought that they were not, still we may think differently.

A boy who would rather spend his small coins for permission to look through a telescope than invest them in cigarettes may never have read a page of Sir Isaac Newton, and yet he is the better for Sir Isaac Newton's work. When in King James the First's days the Bible was translated into English it was translated by scholars who saw all that was most stately in the Latin, all that was most thoughtful in the Greek. We doubt if there is one writer or speaker in the English-speaking world whose fame has faded his generation who had not some knowledge of the King James version—"that stupendous work," Macaulay says, "which if all else in our language were to perish would give the world an idea of the variety and richness of its contents." If an English farmer, a Scotch shepherd, a Puritan in a New England fishing boat impressed his neighbors with his pathetic or stately eloquence he owed the larger part of it to the Bible. Does any one suppose that John Bunyan got his style from the tinkers he met along the road, or from the jockeys at the races, or the folk who kept the booths at the fairs?

John Bunyan, though not taught Greek and Latin, read day and night in a translation made by masters of Greek and Latin. If it be said that he got his classical training at second-hand, Marlborough said that he got all his English history from Shakespeare. There are persons who have learned something of the Highlands, not by studying Gaelic, but by reading of Rob Roy and Roderick Dhu. We suspect that there are many who have gained all they know of the fantastic and the humorous in medieval Spain from translations of Cervantes. Is not the vast majority of our knowledge second-hand?

* * * * *

Lincoln had a command of Biblical English surpassed by few. No prominent American since his time, unless it be Rear Admiral Mahan, has quoted the Scriptures with such force and tenderness. He followed up his reading of Holy Writ with a study of Shakespeare, and he gave hours and days to Blackstone. In those fascinating commen-

taries he saw what classical training can do for one who can accept the training. Blackstone knew what the Latin language had been, and what it will always be. Speaking through histories and poems, voicing itself in dramas and codes, entering into the courts of law and looking out from the medical prescription, Latin is a living tongue. A man who thought as Lincoln did could not fail to see this, while an idler who only graduates because his father will not let him come home until he does, may not see anything. Lincoln knew the place of Latin in the religious services of a wide-spreading communion, he knew that half Canada spoke one Latin tongue, that Mexico spoke another, that Brazil spoke a third, and as President he offered a commission to Garibaldi who spoke a fourth.

The man who is building a house may not have heard of the law of gravitation, but he obeys it. Lincoln may not have purposely studied Latin in working his way through Blackstone, but let anyone open Blackstone anywhere, and he will find that Latin runs through it. John Bunyan had a finer classical inheritance than many a youth who hangs a diploma on the wall, and Abraham Lincoln had a richer classical inheritance than John Bunyan.

Lincoln

By Angelo Patri

*Author of "A Schoolmaster in the Great City"; Principal
Public School 45, The Bronx*

THE class in history was reciting. They had studied a life of Lincoln for a month and now they were telling the teacher and each other what they had gathered from it.

The teacher sat at the desk, her notebook before her, marking each recitation. Her eyes were sad. Her voice was gray with disappointment. She had tried so hard to fill these boys full of the inspiration of the great soul of this man and now this was all, over and over again:

"Lincoln was born in a log cabin in Kentucky. His parents were poor"—and so on, down to "He was shot in Ford's Theatre on the night of April 15, 1865."

Dry, dreary routine stuff. And she had hoped for some fire, some spark lighted in some soul. Ah, teaching was but a barren trade—

"William," she called. "Wee Wullie," his mother, would have called.

A swaying willow wand of a child rose, holding to the edge of his desk. His face was pale and bore the traces of pain about the great dark eyes. Often William could not attend classes because he was ill. His mother said he was ill; William never mentioned it. He talked very little. It took a great deal to excite him sufficiently to make him use his scant strength in speech and when aroused he spoke with a trace of the Scotch burr of his mother's tongue.

"I'm thinkin'," said he, "that yon was a great mon. A very great mon. In fact, I'm thinkin' that he was the greatest mon of all. You see, he could thole so well.

"You mind, when he was a wee chap, he lost his mither. Trouble came to him in the very beginnin'g.

"When he was a lad he had to work very hard and get very little for it. He chopped wood many and many a day and ploughed fields and tended the cattle. I'm thinkin' how hard his back must have ached at night and him not sayin' a word about it.

"Then he grew into a mon and carried his pain in his mind. He must have, for how else could he know that the slaves were sufferin'g?

"Then he declared the terrible war. Then he suffered a thousand years in one, for if he didn't help the slaves he suffered their pains, and if he fought through the war he suffered the pains of all the people it touched.

"You can see it all in his face. At the end they killed him, but that didn't trouble him, for hadn't he lived harder than ever he could die?

"I'm thinkin' he was a great mon. The greatest of all, for he could thole so." And Wee Wullie sat down.

"Thole," said the teacher with shining eyes, "is the Scotch word for suffering in silence."

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Monday—Valentine's Day

Abraham Lincoln's Historic

By ROLAND RINGWALT



ALL successful merchants have the faculty of raising the capital they need, or of accomplishing more with less money than the average man can effect. There are persons who surprise us by their wide experience, and others who intuitively recognize what in most cases is only learn-

ed by years of contact with the world. It is quite as certain though perhaps less generally recognized that there is a scholarship learned only in a library and a something we cannot call scholarship but an excellent substitute for it which can be won by those to whom schools do not unroll the ample page of knowledge.

Should any of us meet an American, an Englishman or a German well versed in Greek history we feel certain that he has read the master Greeks, either in the original or in translations. But travelers in Greece have met boatmen and shepherds who knew a great deal of ancient Greece because they had talked with their elders. Some years ago a Greek peasant told an American some of the Homeric legends with such eloquence and such delight in the past that the hearer made a remark about commentators on Homer, and the Greek looked amazed. He had never heard that any of the songs or stories of his nation had been printed in books, or that foreigners had heard any of them, but the legends and lays gave new cheer to his holidays and consoled him on the lonely nights. Without knowing Homer as an Oxford prize winner might, he knew him as a Greek of two thousand years ago might have known him.

There are shepherds in the Alps who love the rocks and the vegetation that defies the

winters—these men have not studied geology and botany on the lines of a school course—they have made observations from childhood, and compared their researches with those of others. It may be that there are students of chasms and precipices who never heard of Lyell, but whom Lyell would gladly have consulted. It may be that there are gardeners who never heard of Asa Gray who could have told Gray many facts of plant life. What stores of knowledge of Egypt must have lain in the heads of camel drivers who could not read a letter, and of monks who could barely gather the sense of a liturgy.

No medical course can teach what physicians and nurses learn in the epidemic or in the bombarded hospital. They learn by living through an era, or as the old Greek said "the pilot is made in the storm." With that view accepted we may say that Lincoln was one of the best informed men of his time on the history of his own country. Of his own country—he had no classical training—there were scores of school teachers who knew more of English history than he did, he never studied French chronicles as Parkman did, he never searched the Spanish archives as Prescott did, but he knew what only a man of the frontier could know.

It takes less than a half page of a school history to tell us that France sold the vast Louisiana territory, and some emerge from school content with that isolated fact, unnoting what accompanied it. Others, probably nineteen out of twenty, who finish a grammar school course, know that there were protests in New England against the constitutionality of the purchase of the new

lands, and the high price (so it then seemed) paid for them. But how few born east of the Alleghenies or even east of the Mississippi, dream of the bitter feeling of the French and Spaniards who were, without their consent, placed under a new government. Jefferson, for a time, exercised the power of the old Spanish kings. In Lincoln's infancy there was a French sentiment so hostile to the new republic that Andrew Jackson barely suppressed it by military force. An old world of priests and planters, of hunters and hidalgos, averse to the incoming order of things, struggled in an incoherent and hopeless manner. This is forgotten. All present day school children know of it is that French and Spanish names remain on the map. We have lawyers who know nothing of it, save that Louisiana clings to her French code. But a man born before Louisiana was admitted to statehood, who could remember the acquisition of Florida and the admission of Missouri, who had floated down to New Orleans, and who heard of what Cass was doing in Michigan, studied this history.

Hundreds who have referred to Virginia's close approach to emancipation have never remarked that Indiana came within a hair's breadth of adopting slavery. Lincoln was born in a border state, he understood the feeling of those whose social prestige and commercial importance would rise if slavery was established, he also understood the feeling of the settler who would not build a cabin near a slaveholder's grounds. Before he could vote he knew the intense pride of the planter and the bitterness of the backwoodsman. He grew up knowing that

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Schooling

the issue came to every home, seeing how the free West grew and how the slave states of the South failed to keep up the pace.

While steamboats had startled the country our first great internal improvement was the Erie canal, and that led to a series of projects. In the Illinois legislature Lincoln talked of such plans and lived in an atmosphere of contracts and companies. Surveyor, postmaster, legislator, editorial writer and railroad attorney, he knew the development of the West as well as any of his contemporaries. His desire to be commissioner of the land office, unsatisfied as it was, shows that he longed to see further growth and that he believed himself to be a true pioneer.

Daniel Webster's father had known Indian warfare, but Daniel Webster had not. To New England, to the Middle states, to a good slice of the South all that was past, but Lincoln had reached his majority before Black Hawk went on the war path. Captain Lincoln was an actor in what was only tradition to Washington Irving and little more to Fenimore Cooper. He lived among those who had seen Indians on the war path, and his father had told him of the day the lurking red men had shot his grandfather.

When we consider that Cincinnati in 1844 was amazed that John Quincy Adams should travel so far West we may as well admit that Eastern statesmen had little personal knowledge of the new lands. The gaunt congressman of 1846, the man who debated with Douglas, the candidate who had split rails and kept a country postoffice, knew what even George Bancroft could not have learned from archives, what even Caleb Cushing's industry could not have dug from judicial decisions.

Would an Education Have Spoiled Lincoln?

ARTHUR BRISBANE thinks that it would. This editorial writer, whose words are set before the eyes of millions every morning, is of the opinion that Lincoln could not have gone through an American college without having lost that intensity of purpose and moral vigor which made him what he was. "Four years in college," writes Mr. Brisbane, "might have found him saying: 'Well, there are two sides to slavery. Someone must produce the cotton for England's mills and for the upkeep of a cultured class in the south, and, after all, you'll notice that God did make those Negroes of a different color.' That's how your young college graduate talks of today's labor problems." There is not much satisfaction in trying to say what would or would not have happened to Lincoln had the circumstances of his life been different. But Mr. Brisbane has at least this much justification for his conjecture: he has merely reproduced the precise thing that did happen in the case of many a man of the period. And it must not be forgotten that it is one of the purposes of an education to enable men to look on the world from more angles of vision, so that what might be called the philosopher's paralysis always lies in wait for the young graduate. All colleges need to guard against this. In particular, the current practice of requiring students to uphold any point of view in a debate, merely as an exercise in forensic dexterity, is a crime against the soul of youth. When college tends to dilettantism, or to a loss of ethical fervor, it is a distinctly unworthy social factor! The fact that Mr. Brisbane could write such an editorial suggests that it is a problem most of the colleges need to wrestle with. But there are enheartening signs that many of them are facing with increasing seriousness their task as creators of social responsibility. *Century* 2-7-24

PITH OF OPINION

Would Lincoln Have Been Lincoln?

[From the Universalist Leader.]

What would modern educational experts have made of Lincoln if, as a baby, he had been put in their care? They would probably have started him on sterilized milk, clothed him in disinfected garments, sent him to kindergarten where he would have learned to weave straw mats and sing about the "Blue Bird on the Branch." Then the dentist would have straightened his teeth, the oculist would have fitted him with glasses, and in the primary grade he would have been taught by pictures and diagrams the difference between a cow and a pig, and, through nature study, he would have learned that the catbird did not lay kittens. By the time he was eight he would have become a "young gentleman"; at 10 he would know more than the old folks at home; at 12 or 14 he would take up manual training, and within two years make a rolling pin and tie it with a blue ribbon. In the high school at 16, where in four years he would learn that Mars was the reputed son of Juno, and to recite a stanza from "The Lady of the Lake," then to college, where he would have joined the glee club and a Greek letter fraternity, smoked cigarettes and graduated, and then become a clerk in a banker's office; and never, never do any one any harm! Well—perhaps—we don't know and can't tell what might have been, but we can't help feeling thankful that Lincoln's training and education were left to Nancy Hanks—and God.

ATTITUDE OF LINCOLN EXPRESSED IN GROPING AFTER EDUCATION, BIG NEED OF DAY, DR. FINLEY SAYS

Ill State Register ————— 2-12-1925

The attitude expressed in the self-education of Abraham Lincoln is the greatest need of American education today, Dr. John H. Finley told a large audience which this afternoon at 2 o'clock filled the historic circuit court room of Sangamon county, so intimately associated with the career of the Great Emancipator, at the annual public meeting of the Lincoln Centennial association in commemoration of the anniversary of the martyred president's birth.

"If I were to reduce the education of Abraham Lincoln to the lowest terms," he said, "it would be: to try to know all one can of the truth, to be eager to tell it and then to learn how to tell it."

Dr. Finley discussed the education of Lincoln with considerable reference to education today, stressing the fact that his subject had but a year or less of formal schooling. Yet, he told his hearers, he was great enough of soul and was in close enough harmony with the spirit of the day and determined enough in his application to become a truly well-educated man.

Dr. Finley is at present an associate editor of the New York Times. Formerly he was president of Knox college at Galesburg and of the College of the City of New York.

"'Lincoln' is the best word we can say for democracy," Dr. Finley told his audience.

"Being asked once," he said, to say at a dinner to the Archbishop of Canterbury the best word I could for our American democracy, I said that the best word was that which told of what democracy was giving out of its own pocket for the education of its children, its youth, its young men and women. It was the story of education by the people, of the people,

for the people—an education without which it was not possible that government by the people, of the people, for the people should not perish from the earth. But if I had had to condense my answer literally into one word, I think I should have said simply 'Lincoln.' He is our best word

for democracy, given by democracy, out of democracy's experience so far."

Dr. Finley discussed Lincoln's education from the standpoint of the modern attitude thereto. Admitting that Lincoln's formal education was inadequate, he declared that Lincoln was so great that he overcame this handicap. More formal education would not have harmed him "unless it had taken him away from intimate relations with the soil and from sympathy with his beloved plain people, who interpreted to him what was in the heart of humanity, and unless it had prevented in him the 'terrible simplicity' with which he approached every problem of human relations."

Address in Part.

Dr. Finley's speech, in part, follows:

With all the inestimable contribution of our public schools with all the kindling, enlightening advantages of our higher institutions of learning, there is this constant peril that we shall confound schooling with education. So accustomed are we to estimate educational values in terms, semesters, 'units' of content and 'counts' in time, that I have feared lest we may some time add a new table under the head of weights and measures in Lincoln's arithmetic,—a table in which fifty minutes make an hour, 30 hours make a week, from 20 to 40 weeks, (according to the States) make a year, 16 years (more or less) make a degree, and a degree makes an education.

"I would not lessen the rigor or per-iod of compulsory education. I would find in the school the best preventive of harmful child labor, I do not believe that the education of youth is suffering, as a distinguished University President said, from 'hysterical over-emphasis.' But I do believe that what we need is a greater emphasis on the attitudes and discipl-

nessing the major purpose of education."

Quotes MacDonald.

The speaker then went on to quote the definition of J. Ramsey MacDonald, former premier of Great Britain, of an educated man:

"The educated man is a man with certain subtle spiritual qualities which make him calm in adversity, happy when alone, just in his dealings, rational and sane in the fullest meaning of that word in all the affairs of life."

Logan Hay Presides

Logan Hay, president of the Lincoln Centennial association presided and made a brief introductory talk. The invocation and benediction were given by Rev. W. R. Crencans, pastor of Westminster Presbyterian church. The meeting was brief and simplicity was the keynote of the proceedings.

This evening the centennial association will hold its annual banquet and business meeting at Edwards Place. Dr. Finley and Senator Albert J. Beveridge, who is in the city collecting material for a new book, will be the guests of honor.

"I am very glad," said Dr. Finley this morning, "to see my old friend, Senator Beveridge here. And I am sorry that Governor Lowden, also an old friend is absent. The last time I visited here Mr. Lowden was governor."

"I consider it a great honor to be asked to come back to my native state to make an address on such an occasion. My birthplace is in LaSalle county and my school days were spent in Galesburg."

Story of Lincoln Homs.

As part of the afternoon's program A. L. Bowen of Springfield, reviewed the history of the Lincoln Homestead at the corner of South Elghth and Jackson streets.

plines which were illustrated in the self-education of Abraham Lincoln: the master of the English language, as a tool, an appreciation of the value of words in their spoken and written use, an interest in the world about, through science, a living through his long experiences of the race and making it one's own experience, a learning of the meaning and process of demonstration, a bounding not merely of the things on the earth (geography) but of ideas, and going to the end of knowledge in some field till one is face to face with the Infinite.

"If I were to reduce the education of Abraham Lincoln to the lowest terms, it would be: to try to know all one can of the truth, to be eager to tell it and then to learn how to tell it."

"In Plato's Symposium, Alcibiades speaking to Socrates likened his words to the images of Sthenus, which one found in the market place. They are ridiculous when you first hear them. His talk is of pack-beasts and smiths and cobblers and carriers. But he who opens the bust and sees what is within will find they are the only words that have a meaning in them and also the most divine, abounding in fair images of virtue and of the widest comprehension or rather extending to the whole duty of good and honorable man." But to Abraham Lincoln this skill and power in the use of words, expression did not come without self-discipline—education.

"The ability to read," says President Butler of Columbia University, has well nigh disappeared if the reading be serious, instructive, ennobling; the ability to write, so far as it exists at all, delights to manifest itself in forms of exceptional crudeness and vulgarity—while Algebra and Geometry are as unfamiliar as the Laws of Manu." One does not have to take so pessimistic a view of the state of culture to be driven to Lincoln's curriculum.

"A most recent and excellent biography (Stephenson's) speaks of Lincoln's inadequate schooling as 'giving him no perspective of culture in which to place his immediate experience. But would an adequate schooling in giving him that perspective have harmed him and prevented the

development of 'the most distinctive intellect of a century?' That is a personal question which no man can answer categorically. But I think that this may be said with certitude. It would not have harmed him unless it had taken him away from his intimate relations with the soil, and from sympathy with his beloved plain people, who interpreted to him what was in the heart of humanity, and unless it had prevented in him the 'terrible simplicity' which he approached every problem of human relations. I have just been reading the list of great scholars and teachers whom the University of Chicago has gathered in the last thirty years, and I have said to myself that Lincoln could not have been else than helped by these men whose whole mission it was and is to assemble the data by which reason may show the way forward by the light of its torch.

Many say in resisting school improvements and lengthening the period of school attendance, that what was good enough for Abraham Lincoln is good enough for the children of today. That is true, if only they had the instinct or passion to do what Abraham Lincoln did, without the inflaming or gilding of the mind of parent or teacher—if they would learn how to define and demonstrate or go back to Euclid as he did.

Dr. Finley painted a vivid word picture of Lincoln's self-education, the manner in which he studied Euclid and Latin and law by himself, having had, as he admitted, probably less than a year of formal schooling. He then proceeded to discuss modern education in America in the light of these circumstances and to inquire into what education is doing for the young people of the present.

"We have set up a wonderfully effectual machine for elementary education and compelled every child to pass through it on the way to literacy. But if in doing this we do not inspire or foster in the child a zeal for knowledge, a desire to go on and on as did Lincoln in his search for ideas and in his effort to put them into plain language, bounding his thought north, south, east and west and finally demonstrating it, we are

FINDS IN LINCOLN KEY TO EDUCATION

Dr. John H. Finley Says Secret
Lay in His Ability to Learn
All His Life.

LINCOLN'S OWN ACCOUNT

He "Bounded" a Thought and
Memorized Euclid to Find Out
What 'Demonstrate' Meant.

N.Y. TIMES 2/13/25
Special to The New York Times.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Feb. 12.—The 116th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln was celebrated here today in the Hall of Representatives of the old State Capitol where Lincoln delivered his famous "House Divided" speech. An address on "the education of Abraham Lincoln" was delivered by Dr. John H. Finley of New York.

After quoting Lincoln's own brief statement on his education, Dr. Finley told of an interview Dr. John C. Gulliver, President of Knox College, had with Lincoln which Dr. Gulliver had recorded as follows:

"I want very much to know, Mr. Lincoln, how you got this unusual power of putting things. It must have been a matter of education. No man has it by nature alone. What has your education been?"

"Well, as to education, the newspapers are correct—I never went to school more than twelve months in my life. But, as you say, this must be a product of culture in some form. I have been putting the question you asked me to myself, while you have been talking. I can say this, that among my earliest recollections I remember how, when a mere child, I used to get irritated when anybody talked to me in a way I could not understand. I don't think I ever got angry at anything else in my life. But that always disturbed my temper, and has ever since. I can remember going to my little bedroom, after hearing the neighbors talk of an evening with my father, and spending no small part of the night walking up and down and trying to make out the exact meaning of some of their, to me, dark sayings. I could not sleep, though I often tried to, when I got on such a hunt after an idea, until I had caught it, and when I thought I had got it I was not satisfied until I had repeated it over and over, until I had put it in language plain enough as I thought for any boy I knew to comprehend. This was a kind of passion with me, and it has since stuck by me, for I am never easy now, when I

am handling a thought, till I have bounded it north, and bounded it south, and bounded it east, and bounded it west. Perhaps that accounts for the characteristic you observe in my speeches, though I put the things together before."

"Mr. Lincoln, I thank you for this. It is the most splendid educational fact I ever happened upon. This is genius, with all its impulsive, inspiring, dominating power over the mind of its possessor, developed by education into talent, with its uniformity, its permanence, and its disciplined strength, always ready, always available, never capricious—the highest possession of the human intellect. But let me ask, did you not have a law education? How did you prepare for your profession?"

"Oh, yes, I read law, as the phrase is; that is, I became a lawyer's clerk in Springfield, and copied tedious documents, and picked up what I could of law in the intervals of other work. But your question reminds me of a bit of education I had, which I am bound in honesty to mention. I thought, at first, that I understood its meaning, but soon became satisfied that I did not. I said to myself, 'What do I do when I demonstrate, more than when I reason and prove? How does demonstration differ from any other proof?' I consulted Webster's Dictionary. That told of certain proof, 'proof beyond possibility of doubt,' but I could form no idea of what sort of proof that was. I thought a great many things were proved beyond a possibility of doubt, without recourse to any such extraordinary process of reasoning as I understand 'demonstration' to be. I consulted all the dictionaries and books of reference I could find, but with no better results. You might as well have defined 'blue' to a blind man. At last I said, 'Lincoln, you can never make a lawyer if you do not understand what demonstrate means.' And I left my situation in Springfield, went home and stayed there until I could give any propositions in the six books of Euclid at sight. I then found out what 'demonstrate' means, and went back to my law studies."

Dr. Finley also recalled the testimony of Dr. Newton Bateman.

"This beloved man, who was later my teacher and college President," he said "was Superintendent of Public Instruction in Illinois at the time when Lincoln was first nominated for the Presidency, and had a room adjoining that which Mr. Lincoln used during the eight months preceding his departure for Washington. The door between the offices was wide open, and there was a frequent passing to and fro, so that Dr. Bateman, as he says, saw Lincoln every day for several hours. Mr. Lincoln brought to Dr. Bateman, whom Lincoln called his 'little friend the big schoolmaster,' his letter of acceptance of the nomination saying: 'I think it is all right, but grammar, you know, is not my stronghold and as several persons will probably read that little thing, I wish you would look it over and see if it needs doctoring anywhere.' Dr. Bateman read it slowly, and handing it back said that it was strictly correct with one very slight exception almost too trivial to mention. 'Well, what is it?' said Mr. Lincoln. 'I wish it to be correct without any exception, however trivial.' 'Well, then,' said Dr. Bateman, remembering the rule about the avoidance of a split infinitive, 'it would be as well to transpose the 'to' and the 'not' in the sentence 'and it shall be my care to not violate it.' 'Oh,' replied Mr. Lincoln after looking at it a moment, 'you think I'd better turn those two little fellows end to end?' And he did."

"It was this little friend of Lincoln, the big schoolmaster of Illinois, afterward my college President, who was the last to press the hand of Lincoln as he set out for Washington, sixty-

four years ago this very anniversary day and who hurried back to his office, locked his door and wrote out the speech from memory (a report of which differed in only two or three words from the stenographer's report, Dr. Bateman contending that his version was correct, for the words were 'engraved' on his heart and memory."

Recalling that Lincoln when asked to state for the Congressional Directory what his education was had written the one word, "defective," the speaker continued:

"If it was a 'defective' education that gave us such a man, then, as Lincoln said when complaint was made to him about General Grant, we ought to find out what the brand is and give it to others. What was there in the education of Abraham Lincoln to carry into a system for the education of youth in a democracy—and not only youth, but men and women?"

"The outstanding fact is that his own education did not stop with the school, nor with learning to read and write, nor even with his professional studies. He went back to Euclid at 40. He kept on growing till the sudden end of his life. He went back to Illinois 'to study law,' as he said, 'that is the supreme lesson of his education to those who are living in the Republic which is the 'central fact' in the world today. We have set up a wonderfully effectual machine for elementary education and compelled every child to pass through it on the way to literacy. But if in doing this we do not inspire or foster in the child a zeal for knowledge, a desire to go on and on as did Lincoln in his search for ideas and in his effort to put them into plain language, bounding his thought North, South, East and West, and finally demonstrating it, we are missing the major purpose of education."

LINCOLN AS LEARNER

UNCONVENTIONAL VIEWS OF LIFE.

George Henry Davis 2-12-29

BY GLENN FRANK.

(President of the University of Wisconsin.)

AS A SCHOOLMAN, I am thinking of Lincoln as a learner.

Lincoln was unschooled, but he was not uneducated.

Lincoln and his like are usually hailed as examples of what determined youth can do despite a lack of schooling, with the assumption that Lincoln, let us say, would have been a greater man had he gone through a college.

I am not sure that Lincoln would have handled the civil war more wisely if he had been Dr. Lincoln instead of Old Abe.

I am not sure that the Gettysburg address would have been the better for a course in freshman English with its interminable theme writing.

I am not sure, but that it is a misuse of the memory of Lincoln to use him as propaganda material for a mere expansion of our formal school system, so that all the Lincolns of the future may be guaranteed a seat in a classroom, and be subjected to the same sort of formal schooling now being given to regimented millions.

I prefer to think of Lincoln and his learning method as a point of de-

parture for a fundamental reform of our overorganized, overformalized, overinstitutionalized schools.

It is, I think, more important that the millions that crowd our classrooms be freed to learn as Lincoln learned than that future Lincolns be forced to learn as these millions now do.

I do not pity Lincoln on the score that he was unable to go to school.

I envy Lincoln on the score that he was able to pursue his education by an almost perfect educational method.

Lincoln's education was achieved by two simple methods:

First, he developed a real taste for reading solid books.

Second, he sedulously practiced the art of understanding and handling human problems and situations.

His intellectual activity did not have to travel on a time-table that kept him jumping from one subject to another at hourly intervals until all sustained thought and continuous concentration were rendered impossible.

He did not study in order to pass an examination; he studied in order to know.

It will pay the educators to study the Lincoln method.

side

The Fault that Made Lincoln Angry

THERE is a story that a minister asked Lincoln how he acquired his wonderfully clear style of speaking and writing. Lincoln told him that in this matter the book that was most helpful to him was the Bible. He also said:

"There is only one thing that has, ever since my boyhood, and until the present time, made me angry; and that is a lack of clearness on the part of a speaker or writer. When a mere child I used to go to bed quite tired enough to go to sleep; but when anything was said by the older folks who were still sitting up, which was so clumsily expressed that I couldn't get the meaning, I would lie awake for hours trying to puzzle it out. The one thing that always did, and still does, make me angry is for a person not to make himself clear when he is speaking or writing."

Considering the greater number of people, the greater number of newspapers and magazines, the greater laxity and abandon that is permissible in writing and speaking, it is to be feared that if Lincoln were alive today, he would be pretty constantly angry.

Some of us are more fortunate than Mr. Lincoln in that, instead of becoming angry at a lack of clearness, we are able to see its funny side. Listen to some one tell of a book he has read. He will begin understandably enough; but soon he informs you, "And about this time this fellow sneaked in there and was just about to kidnap her, but she screamed and that other fellow was in hearing distance, and he rushed in and told him he was cruel and heartless, and he knocked him unconscious, and saved her."

Even that isn't so bad as a sentence we recall having to correct in our school days. It reads: "Mr. Brown told Mr. Smith that his pigs were in his garden." Whose garden? Whose pigs? Who told whom? What's it all about?

In making a talk in a young people's organization, surely, after earnestness comes clearness.

The trap that many young speakers and writers, and not a few older ones, are most likely to fall into is this: They study and prepare the subject on which they are to talk to the extent that they clearly comprehend and visualize it. But their blunder is that they take it too much for granted that, as the idea is so very clear to them, they can and will automatically, mechanically make it clear to their listeners. They feel just as confident that with their lips they can pass on an idea, as they could hand over a note which somebody had given them to hand to you.

How many a splendid person has made this blunder, only to be sickened with regret after it was too late to amend it! To grasp, to comprehend, to visualize an idea—that's only a part of the battle. Many seemingly dull, apathetic people can do that. When you are making a talk, what you are doing is not so much expressing your

You feel your subject, you realize it, you visualize it. So far, so good. Now, can you make your listeners feel it, see it, realize it, visualize it somewhat as you do? Can you make your thoughts and emotions, or your truths and principles as clear to others as they are to you? Do you know human nature so well and love it so well that you can to some extent think for the other person, clarify his own thinking for him, tell him what he thinks better than he can tell you?

It takes many aspiring story writers years to discover that what they thought was the ability to write a story was merely the ability to conceive a plot. Lots of people can do that. But whether it's a story or an essay or a talk, here's the idea: your facts or thoughts or truths are, even after your mind grasps them, naked. Now it's up to you to put clothes on them before presenting them to others. Clothe them beautifully and becomingly, and in such a way as that their identity will be unmistakably clear.

F. S.

own thoughts; you are endeavoring, if you are in earnest, to help the other persons think. In fact, you are for the time doing their thinking. How necessary, then, that what you think must be clear to your own mind, and then so carefully worded as to be clear to your listeners. You want to have your subject so thoroughly prepared and developed and perfected that your audience will not for an instant be forced to figure out what it is you are trying to say. Your trying must all be done previous to the occasion on which you make your talk, and you must have tried so efficiently and conscientiously that when the time comes to say your say, there is not a shadow of uncertain trying about it.

Lincoln's Education Text For Thought When Observing The Birthday.

By WILLIS THORNTON.

The best possible observance of Lincoln's birthday anniversary would be for every American to read some of the words Lincoln has written. He wrote so clearly, so simply, so beautifully. And he learned practically unaided.

In the brief "autobiography" which Lincoln wrote once in a personal letter just before the Civil war, he told the story of his education:

"There were some schools, so-called (in Spencer county, Indiana) but no qualification was ever required of a teacher beyond 'readin', writin', and cipherin', to the rule of three. If a straggler supposed to understand Latin happened to sojourn in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizard. There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Of course, when I came of age, I did not know much. Still, however, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three, but that was all. I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity."

So the man looked back on the days of his youth. "I did not know much," he recalled. But he taught himself much later on, after school days were over.

That is the key to all education. Its aim is to make a man wise. Some men, true, became wise without any formal education. Lincoln would never have been a fool, even if he had not been able to "read, write, and cipher to the rule of three." He might even have become wise, for he was observant, curious, reflective.

But education, which means in its original sense, merely the "drawing out" of latent abilities, was necessary to bring out the Lincoln who stands like a colossus over the American scene. Lincoln knew that, and, since ready opportunity was denied him, he fought for every chance to read books, to meet interesting people, to do everything that would widen his horizons and open the broad world to his eager mind.

Read his words, and see how this man who as a youth "did not know much," taught himself mastery of his English language. It enabled him to pass on to people of his own time, and down to us by the written word, the wisdom that came to him as education helped him to develop it.

The ceremonials are well enough. But the best tribute to Lincoln at his birth date this year would be for every American to read his inaugural addresses, the Gettysburg speech, his letters and papers. For by his own naked efforts, Abraham Lincoln made himself not only an educated, but a wise man.

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ILLINOIS JOURNAL
FEBRUARY 7, 1940

Lincoln Course Will Be Offered

School For Adults To Be
Opened Feb. 19.

Courses in Abraham Lincoln and democracy will be offered by the community school for adults, which will open Monday night, Feb. 19, at Springfield High school and run for the nine following Monday nights. Students may register for courses from 7 to 9 o'clock week nights at the Lincoln library, which is sponsoring the school.

Dr. Harry E. Pratt, executive secretary of the Abraham Lincoln association; Paul M. Angle, librarian of the Illinois State Historical library, and Ben Thomas, former secretary of the Lincoln association, will teach the former course. The course in democracy will be taught by Dr. J. F. Isakoff, research director for the Illinois Legislative council, and his assistants, Dr. Gilbert G. Lentz and Dr. Stanley Erikson.

The Lincoln course, which is subtitled "From Cabin to White House," will present the latest findings of research on the life of Lincoln and weave them into the full picture. The series will extend from Lincoln's birth and early life to his departure from Springfield after election to the presidency.

The course in democracy is a study of how it began and how it works. It will analyze the new deal in terms of democracy and will discuss the relations between war and democracy. Doctor Isakoff is a former member of the political science staff at the University of Illinois, where he earned his doctor's degree. Doctor Lentz has his doctorate from the same school, and Doctor Erikson possesses doctor's degrees in philosophy and law from Northwestern university.

Modern Child Has Book Wealth Compared To Lincoln

On Monday, the twelfth of February, the minds of many persons will turn back to the birth of an American president. Abraham Lincoln ranks as one of the leading men in American history.

Perhaps everyone who reads this column knows Lincoln was born in a log cabin. The fact has importance, since it points toward the hard years of his early life.

With few months of school and with few books in his home during his boyhood years, little Abraham or "Abe" might have been expected to grow up without much knowledge. Yet he did learn, and what he learned he put in his mind very firmly.

Lincoln wanted to obtain knowledge, and that is perhaps the main reason why he made good progress.



UNCLE RAY

We are told of times when he walked miles in order to borrow a book.

Present day boys of the United States and Canada do not find it so hard to obtain books. Those who live in cities are able to borrow books in public libraries. If a village does not have such a library, there is likely to be a school library where books can be obtained.

Even those who live on farms, far from a city or village, usually can obtain books. There are traveling libraries which are meant for the special use of families on farms.

Besides being able to draw library books, we may have scores, perhaps hundreds, of books in our own homes. A boy or girl does well to build a home library of worthwhile books.

With the wealth of books around us, we may well remember little Abe Lincoln. If he could draw knowledge from his few books, how much better we should be able to learn!

The main secret of learning seems to be in taking interest and

keeping the mind on one subject at a time.

Now and then I have heard a person say that such and such a subject was not interesting, but it seems to me that a certain amount of interest can be found in everything this world contains. If we obtain a little knowledge about a certain subject, we can keep adding to it. In time we may find the subject more interesting than we thought at first.

If I had more space today, I would like to give examples of how interest in everyday things can grow. Grains of sand have a story in them, and there are stories in a bottle of ink, a lead pencil, a match or a rubber band.

Some school pupils would learn their lessons better if they did not let their minds wander. We had best think of arithmetic when we are doing arithmetic, and think of history while studying it.

Uncle Ray

*Sec. St. Journal
4/10/40*

'One-Room School Didn't Hold Lincoln Back'

GEORGIA, Feb. 11—Abraham Lincoln got involved in a hot discussion on consolidated schools here Monday night.

Donald Sweeney, a dairy farmer, and Peter Mallett, guidance director at Bellows Free Academy, St. Albans, were arguing about student opportunity in one-room schools.

"One-room schools didn't seem to hold Lincoln back," Sweeney asserted.

"They wouldn't hold anyone back with an IQ like Lincoln's. His IQ must have been 160," said Mallett.

A portrait of the Great Emancipator, hanging in the Conger School where the meeting was held, prompted the exchange.

Georgia citizens are scheduled to vote on consolidation for the third time at next month's annual school meeting.

Bone-Rule Schooling

Education in Abraham Lincoln's day was not so much a matter of schoolrooms as one of securing books and opportunity. All are familiar with the rude scene of the boy Lincoln conning his few treasured books by the fitful light of the fireplace. Surely there was no fretting over homework there. Fancy facilities were far from the thoughts of the citizenry. One got to school if an education was wanted badly enough or picked up what learning one could along the way. And one could if one would.

Lincoln had a hunger for schooling. If hard work and attention to lessons could make a man smarter, Lincoln was for it. Instead of complaining at the lack of opportunities he proceeded to do something about it. His reputation as a speller eclipsed even his ability as a catch-as-can wrestler. He went at studying pretty much as he wrestled. Young Abe got a stranglehold on arithmetic, a hammerlock on reading and writing, and, when the time came for reading law, threw Blackstone for a fall.

Much was heard here recently at the Yale symposium on education and science about the necessity for more sweat and toil in the nation's classrooms. It was out of such persistent, bone-rule plugging to learn, as exemplified by young Abe Lincoln, that much of our national progress developed.

An appreciation of learning will beget learning.

LINCOLN AND LEARNING

Today is Abraham Lincoln's birthday. Of the many things that might be said of him, perhaps none is more indicative of what he was than something he said of himself on Dec. 20, 1859:

Wrote Lincoln, to a friend,

"We . . . removed to Indiana in my eighth year. We reached our new home about the time the State came into the Union.

"It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up.

"There were some schools, so-called, but no qualification was ever required of a teacher beyond 'readin', writin', and cipherin' to the rule of three.' If a straggler supposed to understand Latin happened to sojourn in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizard.

"There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Of course, when I came of age I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write and cipher to the rule of three, but that was all.

"I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity."

These are the words of the man who became one of this nation's greatest, and wisest, Presidents.

Of little learning, academically speaking, he was a person of great knowledge, principally self-acquired. He acquired this knowledge because of a constant desire to know more, because he was a great respecter of honest intellect. Throughout his life, it would have been far easier not to have learned more, for what he learned from experience often was bitterly bought, and what he learned from books was achieved only by extraordinary effort.

Lincoln's life and achievements raise many questions, often embarrassing to those with greater opportunities and far less to show for them. Not the least of them is this: What would Abraham Lincoln, always hungry for learning, think of a United States in which, 100 years later:

A junior high school graduate, charged with assault, could not read his own diploma.

A high school graduate, writing an English theme as a Freshman in an engineering university, could not spell "engineering."

A college graduate, 10 years after commencement, confessed he had never had time to read one book completely since.

A public-office seeker said he found it was "better" in campaigning not to admit having had "too much education" or to "talk like it."

All of these things have happened in the last six months in the United States.

Joseph W. Alsop

The Self-Taught President

Thoughts on Lincoln's Birthday

The modern educators who read history—plainly very few and far between—must be unanimously horrified by what history tells them of the education of Abraham Lincoln. Here was the unique American saint. Here was the finest English prose stylist who ever inhabited the White House. Here, above all, was one of the very great presidents a kindly Providence has provided for this country on each of the three occasions when the nation's future was in grave peril. Yet by the standards of the modern educators, he had no education at all.

Or rather what Lincoln read and learned is neither read, nor learned, nor even taught in any normal American school or university today; and Lincoln, *per contra*, went through life without the slightest acquaintance with the social sciences, in happy ignorance of the brand of English favored by the Modern Language Association, without the guidance of economists or computer specialists, and in general in the darkest depths of untaught ignorance.

Once the fact has been faced, I cannot help but feel that a good deal is to be learned from the nature of Abraham Lincoln's intellectual preparation. He said himself that, during his early life, he had in all no more than about a year of schooling. The irregular intervals at school were only enough—and, again, this is his own testimony—to teach him to read and write and do simple arithmetic. Then, when he was a young man, he tackled Euclid on his own and mastered the first six books. Otherwise, he had no acquaintance with any normal school texts of today.

His texts, instead, were first of all the Bible and Shakespeare. Lincoln's Bible was the noble King James version, the repository of the most beautiful, most awe-inspiring prose in our language, and the most truly great work known to me which was produced by a committee—although of course the committee had a matchless reader in Lancelot Andrewes. Today, I do not suppose as many as one university student in a

thousand has ever read so much as a chapter of the Bible in the King James version, and I fear the same ratio of ignorance prevails among American university professors. But Lincoln knew the whole Bible—and he knew the Bible so well, too, that he had most of it by heart.

Lincoln's knowledge of Shakespeare was considerably less complete than his knowledge of the Bible. The comedies do not seem to have attracted him, and these were probably the plays of Shakespeare which he confessed he had never read. His favorites were the tragedies and the histories, and among the tragedies, he put first "Lear," "Hamlet" and (I think oddly) "especially Macbeth." He liked reading his favorites almost better than seeing them acted. "It matters not to me," he said once, "whether Shakespeare be well or ill acted; with him, the thought suffices." So one must conclude that Shakespeare's miraculous insights into the ways of the world and ins and outs of human character meant rather more to Lincoln than Shakespeare's poetry. Yet the poetry meant much, too. He not infrequently recited the great soliloquies, sometimes in the course of important policy discussions, and on a five-hour boat trip to City Point, after Appomattox, he passed the time for his companions with Shakespeare readings. It is interesting trying to imagine a similar journey by water with one of our last three presidents.

After the Bible and Shakespeare, history was his main study. As a young man in New Salem, he read the whole of Gibbon and all of Rollin's history of the world, a standard work of that time in several volumes, with so much space devoted to the Greek and Roman history that you might have supposed the world a much narrower and less various place than it happens to be. In an early address, Lincoln also touched on the subject of education and as first priority recommended "every man to read the history of his own and other countries." The humorists of his time, like Artemus Ward, also diverted Lincoln, as was natural, for he was a great humorist himself. But ex-



cept for John Stuart Mill's essays, and especially the essay on liberty, he seems to have felt a positive distaste for political theory as well as abstract philosophy, and he had no scientific bent.

The first point that strikes you about the foregoing tale of books from which Abraham Lincoln drew his chief intellectual capital is its extreme shortness. But the second point that strikes you is the extraordinarily high average quality of the books. Maybe, indeed, Lincoln's way was rather better than our way. If all of us learned to express ourselves as Lincoln did—by all but getting by heart the King James version—we might even have the cure of the gummy tide of jargon and pseudoscientific pretentiousness which is spreading through the English language of today. Learning from the Bible, I must hasten to add, gave Lincoln's language no tinge of archaism. What he mainly learned, I think, was the extraordinary power of that committee which prepared the King James version to tell stories or to express ideas or to soar into sublime poetry, while rarely using any but short declaratory sentences almost unassisted by the ornament of adjectives and adverbs.

Until recently, every American who was not absolutely illiterate knew the Bible a little, and the vast majority of Americans knew the Bible rather intimately. In all its different aspects, moreover,

the Bible contributed enormously to the life of this country, and not least in its aspects as an historical miscellany. Indeed, I am firmly convinced that the fact the American people have so largely lost touch with the Bible in recent years goes far to explain one of the most perplexing features of modern American life.

In brief, the American people of today have lost the sense of history which was certainly possessed by the Americans of the Revolutionary years and the Civil War years and even the Americans of the years of the first and second world wars. Having lost our sense of history, most of us expect the world to be a bland, undangerous place and grow indignant when the world turns harsh and risks and perils loom on many sides. The Bible, it seems to me, was the main source of the former American sense of history, instructing the many millions who had no opportunity to acquire wider historical knowledge. The Bible was enough, too, for, as I believe, the first need of anyone aspiring to possess a minimal sense of history is the realization that the historical process is and always has been inherently harsh and risky. And in the Old Testament particularly, this harshness and riskiness are only too apparent.

I think it would be an immense gain if all members of all the history departments in all our American colleges and universities were required to get most of the Bible by heart, just as Lincoln did. It would be another great gain if all the members of university history departments were required to have Lincoln's knowledge of the story of the classical world, for that is where all of us in the West began. But maybe the greatest gain of all would be achieved if there were no university history departments with formerly great survey courses damply entitled "Social Science I," as is now the case at Harvard.

This article is adapted from a speech Joseph Alsop gave on the eve of Lincoln's Birthday at Franklin and Marshall College in 1982.

Educational Emphasis on Lincoln

Outstanding American statesmen have advocated for many years that a place be made in our school curriculum for a brief course on Lincoln.

Biographies of great Americans have had little place in our educational system, except as reference books. Information about Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and others and their contemporaries has come mostly through indirect sources.

It is to be hoped that at least in Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, where Lincoln lived before going to Washington, some initiative may be taken in placing in the program of public instruction a brief course in Lincoln.

Much has been written recently about training our prospective statesmen in a political "West Point." Abraham Lincoln made politics a science and actually put in practice some of the fundamental principles in government. No one had a better grasp on the essential verities in democracy and no statesman was ever motivated by a higher purpose in trying to interpret the Constitution in the light of the country's welfare.

LINCOLN FACED ALL FACTS.

Had Better Education Than Formal Academic Course, Says a Professor.

From the Minneapolis Journal.

Lincoln, a rapidly growing, ungainly youth, given to fits of mental depression, had very few opportunities for formal education. But, in the opinion of Dr. Stewart Paton of Princeton university he had a far better education. He says:

"In thousands of ways it was strongly, but unconsciously, impressed on the mind of the young Lincoln that life is a process of adjustment, that progress is slow and that the person who does not face elementary, biological facts squarely, soon gets into serious difficulty.

* * * Circumstances forced Lincoln to learn how to live successfully in a real world.

"If Lincoln had not acquired a fund of information in regard to biological facts and had been forced by circumstances to accept the academic privileges of the day, the Gettysburg speech he might then have written would undoubtedly have attracted as little attention as the oration of the Harvard graduate, delivered on that same memorable occasion.

"He studied human behavior and the reactions of living beings. He realized that life is a struggle to adjust to present conditions and not those in a remote past or in an anticipated future.

"He realized that honesty in meeting difficult situations paid and, also, that it did not pay to form the habit of substituting fictions or phrases for facts and concrete situations."

Behavior, personality and character are more important than the acquisition of knowledge.

Little is gained for a pupil unless he goes out of school with a healthy body, free from bad habits, with a healthy mind, free from bad mental habits, and with the right attitude toward the problems of life.

Chas E. Hughes speaking as governor

of New York at a Peace Conference

expressed a wish that

"In our colleges, and wherever young
men are trained, particularly for political life
there could be a course in Lincoln!"

Fifty-six Days In the School of Lincoln

by William Gould Vinal, Ph.D.

ARE you one of those parents who dares to send his child to the school of Lincoln?

For half of his life Lincoln lived in a log cabin. From seven to eleven his only schooling was in the woods of Larue County, Kentucky. He learned to swim in Knob Creek and became a fair boatman. He knew the wild animals of the forest, matched wits with the horse and ox, made rustic furniture, and although he used a crude weapon, gained first hand knowledge of trees.

Fortunately Lincoln's school still exists. It is as strictly American in origin as the log cabin, the turkey, and the Indian's birch bark canoe. It is a back-to-nature movement. It borrows the best from those unassuming naturalists—the Indian and the settler. It is organized on the plan of a large family. Big brothers and big sisters are guides. Homestead industries are revived. The old hearth-side is again the center of song and spiritual uplift. The council ring has returned. In brief, the old-time activities that demand basal skills and attitudes (as well as knowledge) are being presented by the liberty-loving, experience-method. I refer to the summer camp.

The summer camp program is as old as the pioneer and as new as the most progressive school. The furnishings are pine woods, the old swimmin' hole, animal tracks, stars overhead, a sturdy rock, and glowing embers. The campers share worth while friends, health-giving sunlight, knowledge of the open, unfailing energy, the goodness of sound sleep, and the delight of wholesome food. These are essentially the kingdom of youth.

The child setting out for camp is not told that some day he will be president of these United States. He has a job to do. He is going to learn how to live with others. He is going to be his best self as he wants to make good with the gang. His parents are sending him to a laboratory of human relations. In his own mind he is definitely bound on the most interesting adventure of his life. He is starving to be a leatherstocking in the school of the woods.

He is not a "laggard on the way to school." He does not ask what grade do I enter, what time do I recite, what textbook do I use? Instead of sitting at a fixed desk he uses his muscles. There is room enough to throw a stone. There is freedom enough to allow fresh mud to squeeze up between his toes. He crams his pockets with nuts, apples, or shells. He growls like a bear, blows off steam, or just fishes. In camp he finds his rightful heritage—

tree climbing, cave hiding, brook wading—the great muscle and brain builders of the past.

Vacation and vacancy come from the same origin but not for the boy who is sent camping. He shares the enthusiasm and joy which comes to everyone who is whole-heartedly engaged in purposeful work. His activities are simple, common-place, and homely. He can understand them, and thereby he learns the most profound principles of life.

Take out 56 day-by-day profit-making, joyful shares for your child in a well organized camp. Camp interests are of the home-spun variety. Camp activities grow out of child needs. To visit the Heron rookery on an island he must be able to canoe. There cannot be safe canoeing without certain ability in swimming. To go swimming he must obey certain food laws. Each step is a vital part of his existence. Out of such experiences comes growth. And

parents reap the satisfaction of knowing that all in all their child's main business is to live a healthy, happy, helpful life.

And next winter camper-parents will learn about the *camp spirit*. Thousands of campers will show it. Many of the finest things that your child will do will be because he did them in camp. For such a child every mention of health, the fields, and the Great Spirit will bring a glow of remembrance and deep satisfaction. The child cut off from camp is deprived of a very important part of his education. He is missing the schooling of Lincoln. Sending a child to camp has become a parental obligation.



"Cap'n Bill" is well known as an educator, scout and nature guide. He is the author of Nature Guiding; The Naturalists' Diary; Camp and Field Notebook; formerly President of the Camp Directors Association. He conducted a girls' camp for many years and is the founder and director of a Nature Guide School.

The Cosmopolitan Directory of Summer Camps beginning on page 6 offers a list of good camps from which to make your selection. Write to those that appeal to you and arrange to meet the directors or their representatives. If your child has never been to a summer camp and you wish to discuss the matter further, we shall be glad to hear from you. Our representatives have visited camps in all sections of the country and we have on file comments from hundreds of parents whose children have spent profitable summers in camp.

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